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Opinion Page Editor
Indianapolis Star
P.O. Box 145
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Dear Sir or Madam:

On Monday, September 5 the Star carried a front page article reporting that an aide to Vice President Bush has admitted to harboring a prison escapee implicated in planning the bombing of a jetliner in October 1976 in which 73 people died. The article, from United Press International and carried in only one other major U.S. daily newspaper, stated that Felix Rodriguez, "at the request of a wealthy Miami benefactor," agreed to hide and harbor Luis Posada Carriles, a suspect in the 1976 bombing who escaped from prison in Venezuela. Mr. Rodriguez said that this "Miami benefactor . . . financed Posada's prison escape." At the time Mr. Rodriguez assisted the fugitive Mr. Posada, Mr. Rodriguez was managing the secret White House operation from El Salvador run by Col. Oliver North to rearm the Contras in violation of the Congressional ban on U.S. military aid to the Contras. Mr. Rodriguez admitted he "helped arrange" Mr. Posada's arrival at the top-security Ilopango Air Force Base in El Salvador. Mr. Rodriguez then hired Mr. Posada to help run the illegal Contra resupply operation.

Thus, U.S. taxpayers have paid the salary of an aide to the Vice President to illegally harbor a suspected international terrorist. Mr. Posada himself may have been paid by U.S. taxpayers.

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Four principals were implicated in the October 6, 1976 airliner bombing. Two of the four confessed and named Orlando Bosch and Mr. Posada as conspirators. (The confessors later alleged they were unduly coerced to confess.) Mr. Posada, trained by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.), had been chief of operations for Venezuela's DISIP, its version of the C.I.A. Vice President Bush was director of the C.I.A. at the time of the October 1976 airliner bombing.

Mr. Rodriguez was in "regular contact" with Vice President Bush's office while managing Col. North's illegal Contra resupply operation. In fact, Mr. Rodriguez met with the Vice President three times while managing the illegal operation with Mr. Posada working with him. The Vice President claims not to have known about Col. North's illegal activity or about the fact of Mr. Posada's presence and contribution.

When Eugene Hasenfus' plane illegally ferrying arms to the Contras was shot down by Nicaragua in October 1986 it became known that Mr. Posada was in fact an aide to Mr. Rodriguez. The Vice President's national security adviser has stated that Mr. Bush did not know Mr. Posada was working with Mr. Rodriguez, did not believe the press reports and made no further inquiries. The Vice President, furthermore, refused to answer a series of written questions about this matter submitted to his press office within the last three weeks.

The Vice President, while head of the President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism, thus knowingly and willingly ignored reputable

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reports that an important aide had harbored and employed a suspected international terrorist named by two confessors as a conspirator to the killing of 73 people. This presidential candidate, who cloaks himself as the law and order candidate, knowingly and willingly ignored the fact that one of his aides had harbored a suspected international terrorist.

Given these facts, I request the Star consider calling for:

- 1) the F.B.I. and Department of Justice, recognizing the validity of Mr. Rodriguez's printed admission, to immediately arrest Mr. Rodriguez for at least harboring a known fugitive and obstruction of justice, and that authorities hold Mr. Rodriguez without bail pending either criminal prosecution in the U.S. or extradition to Venezuela for prosecution;
- 2) Mr. Posada's immediate arrest either in the U.S. or El Salvador and the utilization of all requisite legal means to extradite Mr. Posada to Venezuela for prosecution;
- 3) the F.B.I. and Department of Justice to investigate Mr. Rodriguez's links to the "Miami benefactor" who financed Mr. Posada's escape from Venezuelan confinement and prosecute or extradite for prosecution any and all persons involved in related illegal acts; and
- 4) Congress, the F.B.I. and Department of Justice to investigate Vice President Bush and his aides regarding their participation in and dealings with this matter and its principals to determine if anyone else has harbored Mr. Posada, obstructed justice or committed misprison of a felony.

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Thank you for serving the public by printing the September 5,
1988 article.

Sincerely,

Todd Hotchkiss
Indianapolis